



## **West by Northwest**

### **Historiographical Observations on Some Recent Chinese Publications on the Countries of the Former Soviet Union and the Borderland**

Littrup, Leif

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## **West by Northwest -**

### **Historiographical Observations on Some Recent Chinese Publications on the Countries of the Former Soviet Union and the Borderland.**

Leif LITTRUP

SAXO-Institute, Department of History, University of Copenhagen, Denmark  
(formerly of the Department of Asian Studies)

In 1991 five new states - The Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan<sup>1</sup> - were created on or close to the western borders of the People's Republic of China, in the Central Asian regions of the former Soviet Union. As a political event it was a major change as China now had to face states who were struggling with both internal and external problems to find their place in the international community, rather than the Moscow centred regime of the Soviet Union. The names of some of these states and their related ethnic identities are transnational and identifies with ethnic groups - or minority nationalities - inside the Chinese borders in regions with a potential for ethnic instability and even traces of secessionism.<sup>2</sup>

From the point of view of historiography these five states also present a challenge. The Chinese textbooks on world history and other general histories, used in education and by the public in general, have largely overlooked this region. When they are mentioned, it is often in connection with external conquests, e.g. by the Macedonians, the Chinese, the Arabs, and Czarist Russia. The history of such conquests is often that of the core state and its civilisation expanding into peripheral territory, while the indigenous historical development of the peripheral regions only receive scant attention. For the history of the Russian and Soviet period the trend in Chinese historiography seems to have been that the border regions between China and the Soviet Union extending from the lower reaches of the Tumen River south-west of Vladivostok to the short border with Afghanistan in the Pamir south of Keshi (Kashgar) in the western part of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region have been regarded as of lesser importance. They have been included in the general history

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<sup>1</sup>I follow the translations given in the list of the full names of the states of the world in the authoritative Chinese dictionary *Cihai* 1999: 2574-75. I will follow the same spelling for these states and nationalities throughout this paper, i.e. Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Turkmen, and Uzbek.

<sup>2</sup>BECQUELIN 2000 is the most recent study of western China in the 1990s

of Russia and the Soviet Union, and their history has been the history of the whole of Russia and the Soviet Union with the capital in St. Petersburg and later in Moscow.

In this context the general practice in Chinese historiography to write the history of states and their territory requires special attention. Could this be continued for these five states, or would a more regional approach be more suitable? The latter solution would seem to be an obvious possibility for a region with new states whose claim to statehood or even 'nationality' is part of the historical process of Czarist Russian expansion and early Soviet nationality policies. Their names after one of the dominating local nationalities were not defined until the creation in the 1920s of administrative units under the names of these later independent states. Some of them were from the beginning republics under the Soviet Union, others started as republics or even prefectures, *oblast*, attached to other units, first of all to the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. In this respect they have similarities to other modern states that have been formed in the process of colonisation and its aftermath. In Chinese historiography they represent, however, a special case as large parts of the territory covered by these states were affected by Chinese western expansion going back to the Han dynasty, but most prominent in the Tang and Qing dynasties.

In this paper I will look at Chinese publications intended to be used nation-wide. There is a Xinjiang bias in the material but it is not strong enough to belie the material as 'metropolitan' or 'national' rather than 'regional'. In the light of previous Chinese historiography on foreign countries the paper will investigate how the history of these five new countries is presented, particularly the identity or nationhood of the new states and their historical roots, including the questions of nationalities related to minority nationalities in China.

The study of Central Asia and its history was not neglected by central Chinese academic institutions before 1991, and Chinese research has always been an important contribution to international scholarship. In 1983 the *Zhongya xuekan* 中亚学刊 [Journal of Central Asian studies] started its first issue.<sup>3</sup> General histories of Central Asia have also appeared, mostly as a result of the endeavours of Zhilai WANG 王治来. Already in 1980 the first volume of his 'History of Central Asia'<sup>4</sup> was published in the capital by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Press. His titles from 1986 and 1989 were published by provincial presses but they appear to have been available nation-wide.<sup>5</sup> It may be a characteristic of modern Chinese historiography, that there are few references to his work in later works on Central Asia. The volume edited by Dazheng MA 马大正 and Xishi FENG 缝锡时, published in 2000, has the 1986 and 1989 titles in the bibliography. The 1980 title is mentioned in a note in the introduction when definitions of Central Asia are discussed.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ma 2000: Pref: 3. The journal is jointly edited by the Chinese Society for Research on Central Asian Culture, and the Section on Relations between China and Other Countries of the CASS Institute of Historical Research

<sup>4</sup>Wang 1980

<sup>5</sup>Wang 1986, 1989

<sup>6</sup>Ma 2000: 505-6, Pref: 2

The 'Outline History of the Five Central Asian States' published early in 2000 with MA and FENG as editors must now be regarded as the authoritative 'national' general history of the five Central Asian states.<sup>7</sup> The work on this volume started in 1992 when the head of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), Mr. Sheng HU 胡绳, pointed out that efforts should be made to publish a volume on the history of these five states. In 1993 it became an official task of CASS under direction of Dazheng MA who is now the head of the Centre for Research of Borderland History and Geography 中国边疆史地研究中心 of CASS and has published on the history of border areas.<sup>8</sup> In 1994 the organisation was established under Mr. MA and Xishi FENG of the Institute of Central Asian Civilisation of Xinjiang University 新疆大学中亚文化研究所, and with collaboration of younger scholars from these two institutions and from the History Department of Xinjiang University 新疆大学历史系. The draft was finished in the first half of 1997.<sup>9</sup> It seems that it has not been possible to follow up on later developments in the region.

In their Preface, the editors present the views of international and Chinese scholarship on definitions of Central Asia as both a geographical and a cultural entity. Central Asia is a commonly used reference to the historical patchwork of nationalities and civilisations in the middle of Asia rather than a clear geographical entity. It may be understood in a broad sense including large parts of the western and northern regions of the territory of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and of Russian Siberia.<sup>10</sup> In a narrower sense it may be the territory centred on the rivers of Amu Darya and Sir Darya. This covers four and a half of the five republics, excluding the northern part of Kazakhstan, but for the sake of convenience all five republics may be included. The editors conclude that this definition of "Smaller Central Asia" has been accepted by most Chinese scholars who work on foreign studies (外学术 *waixueshu*).<sup>11</sup> They continue the Preface with an outline of Central Asian history from the earliest times to the present which they sum up as follows:

"From ancient times Central Asia has been a territory of strategic importance to military commanders. Persian kings and Emperor Alexander conquered Central Asia, the Xiongnu and Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty sent military expeditions to Central Asia, the Turkish Khanates rose in Central Asia, the Arab Empire charged into Central Asia, the cavalry of Djenghiz Khan swept across Central Asia, Timur set up his capital in Samarkand, and finally Czarist Russia and the Soviet Union established their own control of Central Asia."

"From ancient times Central Asia has also been the mutual point of communication used by thought, culture, and religions. Indian Buddhism and Persian culture laid the

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<sup>7</sup>Ma 2000

<sup>8</sup> Among the titles published by Ma can be mentioned: 1989: *Weilate Menggushi rumen* 卫拉特蒙古使入门; 1990: *Zhongguo gudai bianjiang zhengce yanjiu* 中国古代边疆政策研究; 1993: *Bianjiang yu minzu - lishi duanmian yankao* 边疆与民族 - 历史断面研考; 1994 *Qingdai de bianjiang zhengce* 清代的边疆政策, edited together with MA Ruheng 马汝珩.

<sup>9</sup>Ma 2000: 510 (Postscript)

<sup>10</sup>A *History of Inner Asia* by Svat Soucek of Princeton University published in 2000, includes both Xinjiang and Mongolia.

<sup>11</sup>Ma 2000: Pref: 1-3

ground colour of Central Asian civilisation, Greeks and Macedonians added a kind of Hellenistic<sup>12</sup> charm, the influence of the Chinese Han nationality was very profound and far-reaching, the Turkish Khanates buried their own 'roots' in Central Asia, the sword of the Arabs brought Islamic civilisation, Djenghiz Khan sowed Mongolian culture in Central Asia, and finally the Russians built Orthodox Christian churches next to the mosques. From a larger cultural view, Indic culture, Persian culture, Chinese culture, Slavic culture, and Muslim culture mutually influenced each other and mutually penetrated each other. Religiously, Islam, Orthodox Christianity, Buddhism, etc. competed as the dominant influence. Looking at ideological trends, pan-Turkism, pan-Islamism, greater-Kazakhism, and Uzbek-centrism had their ups and downs from time to time but continued uninterrupted. Looking at ideologies, Communism, Islamic fundamentalism, and views of Western values mutually attacked each other. Central Asia is one of the world's regions with most intensive mutual clashes of all kinds of culture, thought, and religion."

"From ancient time Central Asia has been one of the world's complicated areas in ethnic composition. Here lives over one hundred tribes and nationalities, the fundamental nationalities of Central Asia are the Uzbeks, the Kazakhs, the Tajiks, the Turkmen, and the Kyrgyz. Each nationality struggle with each other, they mutually assimilate, and have played one historical tragedy after another."

"Today the five Central Asian countries are already independent states planted in the forest of world nationalities; after they have gone through initial hardship, they have entered the historical phase largely upholding a relatively stable development. The public has reason to believe that the people of the five Central Asian states that once created illustrious civilisations will face the twenty-first century, and will follow the general historical trend and again create brilliance!"<sup>13</sup>

In the third part of the Preface they give an outline of what they want to do with the book and writes:

"The object expounded in this book is, like the title says, a survey of the historical development of the territory where are situated the five Central Asian states: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan. These five states lie at the juncture between the European and the Asian continents with an area of 4 mio. sq. km. and a population of more than 50 mio. people. It borders to the north on Russia, to the south on Iran and Afghanistan, to the west on the Caspian Sea, and to the east on the PRC."

Then follows an outline of the contents, and about the need to include developments in surrounding territories, particularly during the Russian and Soviet period, and the repetitions this may cause when the history of five countries is written. The material that has been used is mostly Chinese and

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<sup>12</sup>Literally 'Ancient Greek' (古希腊 *gu Xila*) but Hellenistic seems to be a more appropriate translation here.

<sup>13</sup>Ma 2000: 13-14

Russian, and when issues are contentious, they have deliberately chosen the commonly most accepted views. The section ends as follows:

"All in all, facing the rise of the five Central Asian states, if our people (国人 *guoren*) want to understand their history and their present, the works in the categories of surveys and summaries that have already been published in our country have satisfied the needs of the readers. But they mostly tilt towards introduction of contemporary conditions, and explain very little about the thread of development from a historical angle. After efforts of five years, we submit to the readers 'Outline History of the Five Central Asian States'. Our greatest aspiration is if it can provide the readers some basic knowledge to understand the history of the five Central Asian states."

From the above, it seems that the editors are quite aware of the difficulties in writing the history of each of these five states from the earliest time to the present. As their work on the individual states proceeds, it becomes clear that they have found support in the histories of each of these countries published in the Soviet period.<sup>14</sup> Some of the difficulties are solved through the composition of the book. The first chapter is on the history of the whole region from earliest times to the 1400s, the second is on the period from the 1400s to the early 1900s, the third on the Soviet period, and the fourth on the period of independence. Each of chapters Two to Four are subdivided into five sections, one for each country. In Chapter Two the history of each country starts from long before 1500 so that, in fact, pre-1500 history is covered in both Chapter One and Chapter Two. I will return to this later, but first I will look at some of the material which Ma and Feng refers to as surveys and summaries.

The first example of this literature was, to my knowledge, the 'Handbook on the Five Central Asian States' published by the Scientific and Technological Commission of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region in 1992.<sup>15</sup> This book is based upon work for a 'Survey of the Soviet Central Asian Region' (苏联中亚地区概况 *Sulian Zhongya diqu gaikuang*) that had started in early 1991 and was finished by June in the same year. The developments in the Soviet Union made it obsolete before publication. After the Fourteenth Party Congress they used this material as the basis for the process of research on the transnational development of the Sino-Kazakh border, which was one of the research items under the State Scientific Commission. The material was reorganised and amended, and the result was this handbook. After an introduction that concentrates on regional geographical features such as rivers, mountain ranges, canals, and railways, the book is divided into sections on each of the five countries. In addition there are two appendices, one on the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS),<sup>16</sup> and one on some regions of the Russian Federal State that have trade connections with the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region in China. The whole book is arranged in consecutive numbered sections that are also indexed.

<sup>14</sup>The first history of the Uzbek Republic was published in 1956 in collaboration with historians from Moscow and Leningrad. Ma 2000: 276

<sup>15</sup>Xinjiang Weiwuer ... 1992

<sup>16</sup>*Duli guojia lianheti* 独立国家联合体, abbreviated *Dulianti* 独联体.

This handbook has a clear geographical orientation, including economic geography and phenomena that influence the economic performance of the country, e.g. the breeding of new species of livestock. There is very little about the history of the country, except when it concerns the economic performance in Soviet times, particularly after World War II. The origins of the nationalities are not elaborated. Under Kazakhstan all we learn in the general introduction that there are the following nationalities: Kazakhs (39.7%), Russians (37.8%), Germans (5.8%), Ukrainians (5.5%), Tartars, Uzbeks, Byelorussians, Uighurs, etc.<sup>17</sup> The section on the Kazakh nationality reads as follows:

"Kazakh Nationality (哈萨克族 *Hasake zu*). In the former Soviet Union they called themselves 'Cossacks' (哥萨克人 *Gesakeren*).<sup>18</sup> They live in the Republics of Kazakhstan (January 1990, around 6,626,000 people) and the neighbouring Republics of Uzbekistan Republic, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and the Russian Federal Union. In the whole Soviet Union there were 8,136,000 Kazakhs (January 1989). They live in China (1,111,700 people, July 1990), Mongolia and Afghanistan. They speak Kazakh (belongs to the Turkish branch of the Altaic family of languages). Those Kazakhs who are followers of a religion<sup>19</sup> are Muslims of the Sunni Sect of Islam."<sup>20</sup>

In 1994 the Central Nationality University Press published a survey of countries surrounding China with Zenghe YU 于增河 as the general editor.<sup>21</sup> As the reason for this publication the preface mentions the external and internal changes and the need for a better understanding. There is no direct reference to the changes in the Soviet Union. The book includes twenty-eight countries of which fifteen borders directly on China, and twelve are close to China. The latter include Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan with the balance in South East and North East Asia. The last country is the USA. It is included because it in many respects is important for China, and it is the first country dealt with in the book followed by Russia and then anti-clockwise ending with Japan. There are two appendices, one on a survey of Asia, and one on the three territories awaiting unification with China: Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao.<sup>22</sup>

From this list one may conjecture, that the editors of this volume had in mind countries that from different points of view are important for the Chinese readers as soon as they mentally, or physically, go beyond the borders of China. It may be significant that among the states mentioned that do not border on China, we find only two Central Asian states and not, for example, Iran whose borders are definitely closer to China than e.g. Indonesia.

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<sup>17</sup>Xinjiang Weiwuer ... 1992: 10

<sup>18</sup>*Gesake* is the Chinese term for 'Cossacks'. There seem to have been some connection - and a lot of confusion - between Kazakh and Cossack, see Soucek 2000: 146-7.

<sup>19</sup>The choice of terminology 哈萨克族的教徒 *hasakezu de jiaotu* implies, probably deliberately, that not all Kazaks are religious - and Muslims.

<sup>20</sup>Xinjiang Weiwuer ... 1992: 17-18.

<sup>21</sup>Yu 1994

<sup>22</sup>Yu 1994: preface and List of Contents pp. 1-28.

This survey has for all the states presented, a section on their history 历史. Under Kazakhstan we read as follows:

"From the third to first centuries BCE class society appeared inside the Kazakh borders, they were the tribal unions of the Wusong 乌松 people and the state organisation of the Kan'ge 坎格 people. From the 500s to the 700s CE there were early stages feudal societies, the Turkish Khanate 突厥汗国, and the Tuergaishi 吐耳盖施国 and Kaluke 卡鲁克国 countries. From the 800s to the 1100s there were the Aoguzi State 奥古兹国家 and the Hala Khanate 哈拉汗国. From the 1000s to the 1200s they were subjected to invasions by the Seljuks, the Khitans, and the Mongol Tartars. By the end of the 1400s the Kazakh Khanate was established and divided into Greater Horde, Middle Horde, and Lesser Horde. In the 1500s the Kazakh tribe (部族 *buzu*) was basically formed. In the 1600s and early 1700s the Kazakhs often suffered from invasion and harassment from the feudal nobility of the Dzungarians (准噶尔 *Zhungaer*). The Chinese Qing government sent military forces to suppress the armed rebellious power of the Dzungars, they removed the threats to the Kazakhs, and the Kazakhs submitted to Qing control. In the 1730s and 1740s the Lesser Horde and the Middle Horde merged into the Russian Empire. Since the middle of the 1800s the whole territory of the Kazakhs has been under Russian control. Due to the cruel repression and control by Czarist Russia, the people in the country unceasingly rose in resistance and struggle. The Kazakh people also actively participated in the first bourgeois revolution from 1905 to 1907, the 1916 Central Asian uprising, the February 1917 revolution that overturned the Czarist system, and the socialist October Revolution that shook the world. After the establishment of Soviet political power, and the start of the internal wars, the Kazakh people with the help of the Red Army defeated the gang of Dutov,<sup>23</sup> smashed the attacks of the White Guards, put down the armed rebellion of the bourgeois nationalist Alash gang,<sup>24</sup> and restored and consolidated Soviet political power. On 26 August 1920 the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Autonomous Republic was established, belonging to the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. The reform of land and irrigation started from 1921 and 1922, and in April 1925, at the time of delimitation of each Soviet Republic as nationality states, the name was changed to Kazakh Soviet Socialist Autonomous Republic. In December 1936 it was made a republic, and at the same time it entered the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and became one of the member republics of the Soviet Union. Before the dissolution of the Soviet Union the Kazakh Republic on 25 October 1990 passed a Declaration of Sovereignty. On 16 December 1991 the assembly of the republic passed the Law of State Independence of

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<sup>23</sup>Cossack general at Orenburg, see e.g. Caroe 1967: 105

<sup>24</sup>The Alash Orda Movement. Soucek 2000: 215.



the Kazakhstan Republic and announced the independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan."<sup>25</sup>

In this text we see some of the problems of Chinese historiography of a Central Asian state: First of all the distinction, or perhaps intermingling, of territory and nationality group. On one hand, the history of Kazakhstan is the history of the territory and the societal development that took place on that territory using the terminology from dogmatic Marxist historiography with the formation of class society, implying the previous existence of primitive society, and the early stages of feudal society. On the other hand, it is the history of the formation of a Kazakh state and of the Kazakh nationality. It is also a history of the loyalty of the Kazakh people to the righteous struggle of the all-Russian people against the oppression of the Czarist regime, and of relations to China, and former Chinese (or Manchu) dominance over the Kazakhs without specification of its relations to the present territory of Kazakhstan. Authoritative Chinese historical maps of the Qing period shows that a large part of Eastern Kazakhstan was part of China.<sup>26</sup> The final regulation of this territory was only made in the 1881 treaties on the Ili region.

The history of the other four states follows a similar pattern, all giving the approximate time for the formation of the dominant nationality and the first appearance of their name in historical sources.<sup>27</sup> Connections to China may be mentioned, but not necessarily under the history of the country. Under Uzbekistan we find e.g. under the section 'Geography', subsection 'Important Cities', Tashkent the following remark:

"From our country in the old days ZHANG Qian, Faxian and Xuanzang all passed by Tashkent."<sup>28</sup>

where ZHANG Qian is the explorer sent to the Western Regions around 130 BCE, and Faxian and Xuanzang were Buddhist monks travelling to India around 400 and 630 CE respectively.

In this book we also find an example that Chinese terminology for nationalities may sometimes create confusion. One well known example is the Chinese use of the *xiongnu* 匈奴 for both the states on the northern borders during the Han dynasty, historiographically now classified as a Chinese minority nationality, and for the Huns who were found in the western part of the continent, i.e. Europe, several hundred years later. In this work there is some confusion of German and Deutsch.<sup>29</sup> In the section on nationalities in Kazakhstan we find Kazakhs and Russians, both close to 40% of the total population, and Germans and Ukrainians both close to 6%. The Germans are here called *Rierman* 日耳曼, the usual Chinese word for the Germanic tribes of Europe in Roman and post-Roman times, and also for the language group of Central, Western, and Northern Europe.<sup>30</sup> In the section in the same book on nationality questions in Russia there is a subsection on the 'Deutsch' (德意志 *deyizhi*) people. In 1918 the 'Deutsch' Autonomous Region was created on the

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<sup>25</sup>Yu 1994: 209

<sup>26</sup>Tan 1982-87: 8: 52-53

<sup>27</sup>Yu 1994: 226, 239, 256, 267

<sup>28</sup>Yu 1994: 254

<sup>29</sup>The German term for 'German' as the people in Germany 'Deutschland'.

<sup>30</sup>Yu 1994: 216

Volga with migrants from Germany *Dequo* 德国. It became a republic in 1924 and after 1941 over one million 'Deutsch' people were scattered by force east of the Urals to various areas including Kazakhstan.<sup>31</sup> They are obviously the Germans of Kazakhstan, but the reader of the handbook who are not familiar with the use of the two terms, would not immediately identify them as the same nationality. The immediate reason for the confusion may be a slip in the editing of the book, but a deliberate use of terminology that depend on the context in which it is being used, cannot be excluded.<sup>32</sup>

In 1999 two books on Central Asia with shorter descriptions of her history was published by people related to CASS. One is 'Introduction to the five Central Asian states'<sup>33</sup> edited by Changqing ZHAO 赵常庆 in the series 'Oriental Culture Collection' (东方文化集成 *Dongfang wenhua jicheng*). The Editor-in-Chief of this series is Xianlin JI 季羨林,<sup>34</sup> Emeritus Professor of Oriental Languages at Peking University. The authors are researchers at the CASS Institute of Eastern European and Central Asian Research except one, Zhiping PAN 潘志平 who heads the Institute of Central Asian Research at the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences. The book presents itself as the first scholarly work presenting systematic research on contemporary Central Asia.<sup>35</sup>

The other book is 'China and Central Asia' edited by Jundu XUE (Chun-tu HSUEH) 薛君度 and Guangcheng XING 邢广程. Chun-tu HSUEH is a China-born American scholar with publications on Chinese history and international relations, particularly from the 1900s, and he is now Chairman of the Board of the Huang Hsing Foundation. Guangcheng XING is Research Fellow and Deputy Director of the CASS Institute of Eastern European and Central Asian Research. He also contributed to the 'Introduction to the five Central Asian states'. The book was produced in the Institute with the support of the Huang Hsing Foundation. In addition to Guangcheng XING it has two authors, Changqing ZHAO and Zhuangzhi SUN 孙壮志.<sup>36</sup> The book starts with a chapter on the history of Central Asia and her historical relations with China.

The first chapter of 'Introduction to the five Central Asian states' edited by Changqing ZHAO, is written by Zhiping PAN. It has sections on Natural Geography, Human Geography, and History. The historical section does not, at least for the earlier history, make any distinction between the present states, but takes a general view of the development of the region and her relations with the surrounding world. In a section on East-West relations and Islamisation, the emphasis is on trade and religion. For the period after the opening of the direct sea lanes between the Atlantic and Indian and Pacific oceans, it elaborates on the continued trade in rhubarb from Western China through

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<sup>31</sup>Yu 1994: 150

<sup>32</sup>Xue 1999: 5 call this nationality *deyizhi*.

<sup>33</sup>Zhao 1999

<sup>34</sup>Among the members of the Honorary Advisers of the series are Göran Malmqvist, Emeritus Professor of Chinese at Stockholm University and former president of the EACS, and Glen Dudbridge, Professor of Chinese at Oxford University, and present (2001) president of the association.

<sup>35</sup>The information here is gathered from the inside covers etc. of the volume.

<sup>36</sup>Xue 1999: Introductory material and colophon.

Central Asia to the West. As for religion, the emphasis is, of course, on Islam coming from the west and continuing to China. But first comes the other religions, Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism from Persia, Nestorian Christianity from the Mediterranean region, and Buddhism from India, all passing through Central Asia on their way east. Islam came last, and has not been challenged and replaced, and there is a longer description of the Sufi developments of Islam in the region.<sup>37</sup>

The traditional East-West *problematik* connected to the Silk Road, is supplemented by the idea, found in more recent Japanese scholarship, also to look on South-North and Turkification. These are the relations between the nomadic societies to the north and the sedentary agricultural societies to the south, 'the dividing line roughly following the Great Wall of China, the Tianshan Mountains, and going through the Aral and Caspian Seas to distant Europe.'<sup>38</sup>

Sedentary agriculture was in the oases. They received and transmitted technology and thought, and they were partly quiet, closed worlds, and partly isolated islands in the great sea threatened by the surrounding world. Nomad societies required movement, constant fights and migrations to grazing land, as there was always limits to how much livestock a given area could sustain. In order to protect themselves against such onslaughts, the sedentary peasants constructed, at great cost, protection against the nomads, such as the Great Wall of China and the walls and trenches on the northern banks of the Syr Darya river. But such man-made constructions could not obstruct the exchange, and more recent research has shown that such defensive walls at the same time became lines for economic and cultural contact and markers for contact and assimilation.<sup>39</sup>

There was a constant stream of nomads towards the south, and most of them turned to a sedentary lifestyle. The last was the Turks, and in scholarly circles the term 'Turkification' (the Chinese text here has the German expression 'Turkisierung') and Turkestan is used about this process and the territory where, from the 500s to the 1200s, the original Indo-European speaking people were replaced by the Turks. Because of the excessive use by pan-Turkism, the terminology has become somewhat muddled, and needs some clarification. This is then attempted.<sup>40</sup>

The subsection on the north-south relations ends with a short history of each of the six nationalities that have their own territorial and administrative identity. The sixth nationality in addition to the 'national' nationalities is the Karakalpaks who have their own Autonomous Republic inside the Republic of Uzbekistan.<sup>41</sup>

The Historical Section ends with the history of Russian expansion and the demise of the former state formations, and also deals with pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism. The final subsection is on Chinese historical relations with Central Asia from the earliest times to around 1900.<sup>42</sup> The history of the Soviet and post-independence periods is scattered in the other chapters, and these chapters are not organised according to each country.

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<sup>37</sup>Zhao 1999: 16-20

<sup>38</sup>Zhao 1999: 21

<sup>39</sup>Zhao 1999: 22

<sup>40</sup>Zhao 1999:23

<sup>41</sup>Zhao 1999: 28

<sup>42</sup>Zhao 1999: 29-35

In 'China and Central Asia' the emphasis in the short historical section is, before the Common Era, on the Persian and Macedonian empires. Developments in the Common Era emphasise the religious movements and the formation of the five nationalities. For the 1800s the emphasis is on the three Khanates of Kokand, Bukhara, and Khiva that controlled most of the territory of the four smaller republics, and later the Russian conquest and the popular resistance against it.<sup>43</sup> Samarkand was established at the time of the Persian dynasty of the Achaemenids (559-330). It was then called Maracanda, and was a commercial centre and also a centre of a slave-owning nobility.<sup>44</sup> After the break down of the Arab Empire, there appeared in the Central Asian region a number of feudal Turkish Khanates.<sup>45</sup>

The book also has a section on historical relations between China and Central Asia. The relations with the Western Regions, west of the Yumen Pass and the Yang Pass go back to the Qin dynasty, or even before the Qin became a dynasty. The authors are aware that it is sometime difficult to distinguish between Chinese relations with the present Xinjiang and with Central Asia, but they attempt to make it as clear as possible, e.g.:

"During the Western Han the formal relations between China and Central Asia started with the sending of ZHANG Qian as an envoy to the Western Regions (西域 *xiyu*); that China in the Western Regions established Protector-generals (都护 *duhu*) demonstrates the formal firm establishment of Chinese control over the Western Regions - - including part of the Central Asian region."<sup>46</sup>

But it is quite clear that they operate in a difficult area where Chinese Han chauvinism may creep in, such as:

"In the Qing period the Dzungar Khanate controlled the present Chinese Xinjiang and part of Central Asia, but the relations between the Dzungar Khanate and the Chinese Qing Dynasty was the relation of centre and local. The Dzungar Khanate was a vassal of Chinese Qing Dynasty, but the kings of the Dzungar Khanate was not satisfied to be a vassal of the Chinese Qing Dynasty. They prepared to break loose from the Chinese Qing Dynasty, the west [was to] to govern the Western Regions."<sup>47</sup>

The section ends with a survey of the relations with Russia, and the treaties of the 1800s, particularly concerning the Ili-question, but also trade and the role of the Kazakhs and other nationalities as middlemen in trade between China and Russia, when Russian merchants were not allowed into China.

I will now return to the work of the historians, but before I look at the 'Outline History of the Five Central Asian States', let us take a look upon developments on the historiography on Central Asia in the 1990s in the authoritative Chinese journal on world history, the *Shijie Lishi* 世界历史 [World

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<sup>43</sup>Xue 1999: 7-13

<sup>44</sup>Xue 1999: 7

<sup>45</sup>Xue 1999: 9

<sup>46</sup>Xue 1999: 23

<sup>47</sup>Xue 1999: 27

history]. According to my registration the journal only carried two pieces on Central Asian history, and one of them is really not on Central Asian history as the aim of the author is to support the view that the Cengtan state 层檀国 was not a Seljuk Turkish state, but an African state.<sup>48</sup> In a mild contrast to the 1980s when the journal carried a few pieces on older Central Asian history, this leaves us with the report on a mini conference in Shanghai on Central Asian questions which was held in November 1994.<sup>49</sup> The contents of this journal does, of course, not reflect all research and publication on Central Asian history in China. I would expect to find considerably more material in specialised publications, particularly from Xinjiang Province, but my interest here is more on what the average Chinese historian and others with an interest in non-Chinese history would get to know about Central Asian history as opposed the history of the rest of the world, particularly the history of the Western world which, not unexpectedly, has a quite different representation in this journal.

The mini conference in Shanghai in November 1994 was concerned with the political and economic situation in the independent Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union, and their foreign relations, new developments in Islamic fundamentalism and pan-Turkism, and the policies China should adopt. There were over thirty participants from research institutions, companies and news agencies located in Shanghai. Their academic disciplines are not revealed, only that they were 'specialist scholars' (专家学者 *zhuanjia xuezhe*).

The historical background of pan-Turkism was recognised at the conference to be a product of pan-Slavism. It was cultural and aimed at resistance to Russian control. Later it changed to be more political, particularly when it was used by Turkey in a wish to establish a Greater Turkish Union State. Now there are three characteristics: 1) Cultural and political pan-Turkism are merged; 2) Pan-Turkism is supported by some leaders of some Central Asian states; 3) Pan-Turkism is supported by USA and some other Western states. The region is of strategic importance and internationally many powers wish to infiltrate and struggle for this region. Islamic fundamentalism uses political, cultural, religious, and other channels to infiltrate Central Asia, but because the leaders of Central Asian states and the middle aged and younger population are atheists, it meets with resistance, and there is a relatively strong tendency towards pan-Turkism. Russia and the USA struggle over the region, and USA support pan-Turkism to check Islamic fundamentalism whereas Russia has an attitude opposing pan-Turkism and the possible rise of a Greater Turkish Union State directed towards itself. Some of the participants cautioned against the slogan of 'creating a 'Euro-Asian Coalition' (联盟 *lianmeng*). This may not only be economic co-operation with new railways and opening of a 'New Silk Road', it may also be a new duplicate (新的翻版 *xinde fanban*) of pan-Turkism.

On Islamic fundamentalism the participants noted the mushrooming of mosques after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, but the basic attitude was that the resistance among the population to Islamic interference was too great. There could not emerge states where religion and politics melted together Iran-style, and it would not be a threat to stability in Central Asia.

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<sup>48</sup>Xu 1993

<sup>49</sup>Cui 1995

On the economic and political situation the participants recognised that there were elements of both stability and instability. The economic conditions had worsened with fall in production, rise in money supply and prices, a lowering of living conditions, and slow reforms. The downward slide of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan was relatively relaxed. Some leaders regard a stable currency as the main obligation, and from an economic point of view there is a long road ahead. Politically each state has seen unrest and Tajikistan incessant internal war. The most stable is Turkmenistan. Some participants were of the opinion that in the shorter term there would be no major unrest. International ties are still primarily with Russia, both economic and defence, with Western relations as second. With China there is economic exchange, and South Korea infiltrates economically.

In retrospect, some participants found that former Chinese understanding of Central Asia had four errors: 1) Overemphasis on the influence of religion. There is a latent threat but it has not yet surged to become an important contradiction. 2) The influence of Islamic fundamentalism and pan-Turkism in Central Asia is limited, and not like the apprehension immediately after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. 3) With regard to economic complementarity the Chinese were first optimistic, but this has been sliding downwards. 4) The economic development is slow, but the situation is relatively stable and different from the originally anticipated instability.<sup>50</sup>

The 'Outline History of the Five Central Asian States' that, as said, must be regarded as the authoritative Chinese history of Central Asia is, of course, much more detailed than these general outlines of Central Asian history, but not necessarily more analytical. There are more details, but it becomes clear rather quickly, that the work, in the tradition of general world history writing of the last fifty years in China, is predominantly a history of events with very little analysis of material and spiritual phenomena and their possible influence on the course of history. They are there, of course, but more like isolated phenomena than as part of a historical process. And the book does take us down to the more remarkable tactical details of warfare:

"On this Sogdian cliff fort, the soldiers of the fort said jokingly that only when Alexander's soldier had grown wings would they be able to conquer it. Then 300 Greek cliff climbing experts, using iron awls, mounted the precipitous cliff and forced the defending soldier to surrender."<sup>51</sup>

When it comes to the social formations of dogmatic Marxism, which has been the staple diet of Chinese historiography, we find remnants, but they have been toned down considerably. About slave society we only get general statements, such as

"Primitive society gradually dissolved and changed over towards class society."<sup>52</sup>

or

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<sup>50</sup>Cui 1995: 125-26

<sup>51</sup>Ma 2000: 13

<sup>52</sup>Ma 2000: 6

"Fragmentary material handed down from Classic authors and modern archaeological discoveries proves, that from the early 600s to the early 300s BCE several slave states were formed in these regions."<sup>53</sup>

In recent years the existence of slave societies - not of slaves - has been questioned in Chinese as well as in international historiography, but the authors do not attempt to throw new light on this question. On the transition to the feudal period in Central Asia we find for example the following:

"If we say that the time of the Kushan culture represented the flourishing of the slave system, then the Central Asian culture at the time of the *Yanda* (Hephtalites) reflected the beginning of the rise of feudal relations in some Central Asian regions. Castles (城堡 *chengbao*) appeared in Khorazm. Several small manors (小庄园 *xiao zhuangyuan*) of single peasant families were organised into one new settlement.<sup>54</sup> The nobility selected the head of irrigation channels to erect castles as convenient for controlling the water sources and the manor forts of the peasants. Each manor (庄园 *zhuangyuan*) and its surroundings formed a town (城镇 *chengzhen*), each independent and self-supplying. At this time the Central Asian region was politically in a scattered situation, each going its own ways, and in a number of small countries. No matter if it was Kushan or Hephtalites rulers, apart from collecting taxes they did not interfere in the administration of the vassals."<sup>55</sup>

The part on the history of Central Asia up to the early 1400s ends with the developments in the Mongol and Timurid empires. There were no territorial divisions corresponding to the present states, but the earliest formation of the state-bearing nationalities is recorded. The part of the book on the 1400s to the early 1900s is divided strictly according to the states, and for each of them the history is taken back to the formation of the nationality, and even to the earliest historical traces of what may have been the ancestors of the modern nationality. This is most clear in the case of the Kyrgyz. They are already mentioned in the *Shiji* as *Gekun* 鬲昆 or *Jiankun* 坚昆 around 200 BCE, living on the upper reaches of the Yenisei River and controlled by the Xiongnu.<sup>56</sup> Already in the 900s it seems that there were some Kyrgyz in the Tianshan region,<sup>57</sup> but the first clear indication of their presence there is in the 1500s.<sup>58</sup> The authors do not accept the view, that the formation of the Kyrgyz nationality may be unquestionably connected to these earlier people. Russian scholars reckon that the nationality was probably formed around 1500 by an amalgamation of Turkish and Mongol people. This book disagrees because most of the Kyrgyz were still in the Yenisei region at that time. The formation of the nationality had to await the great migration around 1700 when, on the orders of the Dzungar ruler, Tsewan Araptan, these people came to the Tianshan region, where

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<sup>53</sup>Ma 2000: 7

<sup>54</sup>Literally 'residential area'

<sup>55</sup>Ma 2000: 21-22. Identification of the name *Yanda* presents problems. In Chinese as well as foreign sources there are different names and translations. The story told here about the *Yanda* corresponds to that on the Hephtalites in Sinor 1990: 298-301.

<sup>56</sup>Ma 2000: 143

<sup>57</sup>Ma 2000: 145

<sup>58</sup>Ma 2000: 147

they amalgamated with the Kyrgyz who already were there.<sup>59</sup> In Russian and early Soviet times they were called Kara-Kyrgyz, and when in 1924 the Soviet government divided the Central Asian region along nationality lines, the Kyrgyz was still called the Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Region. It was not until 1925 that "the historical correct denomination of the Kyrgyz nationality" was restored. This was followed up in China, where in 1935 the Xinjiang Provincial Government formally decided to transliterate the name of this nationality as Keerkezi 柯尔克孜.<sup>60</sup>

The formation of the Turkmen nationality is given as follows:

"In the middle of the 1000s Turkmens established the strong Seljuk Dynasty. In the 1200s they were subjugated by the Mongols. In 1405 after the death of Timur, the control of the empire over the Turkmens was close to collapse. Therefore the economy of the Turkmens in this period reached relative development, and a part of the Turkmen tribes on the eastern shores of the Caspian Sea concluded the transformation from nomads to sedentary livestock husbandry and oasis agriculture. The irrigation farming region of the Murgap, the Jiezhana, and the Amu Darya rivers, centred on the Merv (now Malei [Mary]), flourished again. Around the 1500s was the important time for the formation of the Turkmen nationality."<sup>61</sup>

The Central Asian states were gradually absorbed into Russia in the 1800s. Kazakhstan was the first and in 1822 the 'Siberian Kyrgyz Pact' was concluded with Russia on the government of the Kazakh Middle Horde (central-northern Kazakhstan) and in 1824 of the Lesser Horde (western Kazakhstan), which in effect ended Kazakh independence.<sup>62</sup>

Russian expansion continued and ended with making Tashkent the centre of Russian control over the region with administrative divisions that did not promote the formation and the strengthening of the nationalities. The international background for and consequences of the Russian expansion into Central Asia is touched upon,

"The Russian conquest of Kyrgyzstan took place from two directions, from one direction they conquered the Kokand khanate and occupied the Kyrgyzstan region inside the borders of Kokand; another direction was through military nibbling (蚕食 *canshi*) and a series of unequal treaties, [leading] to occupation of the Kyrgyzstan regions which at that time was under the rule of the Qing dynasty."<sup>63</sup>

and British presence is mentioned:

"In the 1830s the contest between Czarist Russia and Britain over the Central Asian and the Middle Eastern regions got worse and worse. Russia secretly entered into the struggle for the Iranian Shah throne. Under their support, Mohammed Shah won the

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<sup>59</sup>Ma 2000: 148-49

<sup>60</sup>Ma 2000: 142. The transliteration is still in use in the PRC for this nationality living in Xinjiang. *Cihai* 1999: 2573; Xinjiang... 1992: 187.. The quoted remark is repeated in the Uzbek section in Part 3 on the Soviet Union. Ma 2000: 289

<sup>61</sup>Ma 2000: 167

<sup>62</sup>Ma 2000: 100-01. Kazakh territory had since the 1600s been divided into three Hordes

<sup>63</sup>Ma 2000: 157



throne. Using this, Czarist Russia began to infiltrate Central Asia through Iran. The British intensified their activities in Afghanistan. Several British spies under all kinds of identities came to Khiva and Bukhara from Kabul to collect information, establish strongholds, to be used as a springboard for military advance from India towards Central Asia and the Caspian Sea."<sup>64</sup>

Later the struggle over Turkey plays a role in the book, but a more profound analysis of developments in - European - international relations and the role of Central Asia is not attempted convincingly.

After the formation of the Soviet Union and the ensuing civil war the question of the Central Asian region came on the agenda, as follows:

"On 30 December 1922 the first meeting of the union parliament of the All-Russian Soviet Socialist Republic was called, and it passed the proclamation of the establishment of the Soviet Union and the Union Treaty. The first group to enter the Soviet Union were the following four: Russia, Transcaucasus, Ukraine, and Belarus. At the time Kazakhstan, as the 'Kyrgyz Socialist Autonomous Republic', was still part of the Russian Federal State. But the establishment of the Soviet Union created conditions for the advancement of equal autonomy for each nationality inside the borders. The division of Central Asia after the October Revolution in the republics of Turkestan, Bukhara, Khorazm, etc. did not correspond to the distribution of the nationalities there. In particular, none of the Central Asian nationalities could form a majority of their people inside one Central Asian nationality republic."<sup>65</sup>

The solution to some of these problems started in 1924, but it took its time, and was rather complicated. If we take Kyrgyzstan as an example we get the following picture: The Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic was created on 10 June 1924 and it included Ferghana Prefecture. The Kyrgyz living in that prefecture were, however, not included and on 12 June the Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Prefecture was created to belong to the Russian Federal State. It included districts from various Central Asian regions to the north east of Ferghana. In March 1925 a Kyrgyz was elected chairman of the executive committee of the prefecture. On 25 May 1925 the All-Russian Central Committee changed the name to the Kyrgyz Autonomous Prefecture and "from this restored the historical correct denomination of the Kyrgyz people." On 1 February 1926 it was changed to the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Autonomous Republic, still belonging to the Russian Soviet Federate Socialist Republic, and finally on 5 December 1936 it was raised to be a member state of the Union.<sup>66</sup>

It is clear that the nationality question loomed large in the ordering of conditions in Central Asia after the foundation of the Soviet Union, but the book does not overlook that it also existed between the indigenous nationalities. One example from the Russian period is:

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<sup>64</sup>Ma 2000: 176

<sup>65</sup>Ma 2000: 217

<sup>66</sup>Ma 2000: 288-9

"Compared to the Turkmen tribes living along the eastern coast of the Caspian Sea, the development of the Turkmen societies under the Emir of Bukhara and the Khan of Khiva, centred on the two regions of Chärjew and Dashhowuz, must be relatively much more backward. This was not only because these regions were relatively removed from regions along the Caspian coast that had earlier been opened to Russian commercial and industrial capital, it was also connected to their long-time placement under the political suppression and economic exploitation by other nationalities (异族 *yizu*).<sup>67</sup>

When it comes to the Soviet period, nationality problems rose after the mistakes of the collectivisation movement and the cleaning out of counterrevolutionary movements in the 1920s and 1930s, and from the settlement of deportees during World War II and the opening of new land in the 1950s. The main question arose when the Germans and the Tartars who had been resettled there in World War II, wanted to return to their homelands in the 1960s.<sup>68</sup> It should be noted that in the narrative on collectivisation, the texts nowhere relates directly to resistance by specific nationalities. It is a general resistance which, in principle, also include the Russians and other outside nationalities but as they were peasants or nomadic or semi-nomadic people, many of them were probably indigenous nationalities.

Participation of the national minorities in public life also became part of Soviet politics:

"With regard to social and political life, after the delimitation of the Central Asian nationality states, the Soviet government and the Bolsheviks began to carry out ethnicisation of the minority republics and autonomous prefectures 州 *zhou*. It included the use of minority language in official documents, the ethnicisation of cadres of organs, the use of minority languages in schools, courts of law, and similar places. On 20 May 1925 the third meeting of the Soviet Representative Assembly made a resolution on the participation of minorities in Soviet construction."<sup>69</sup>

Textbooks were produced in the nationality languages, the first in Turkmen already in 1922-23.<sup>70</sup> Primary education was gradually spread to the whole population, and people could chose between the use of their own language or Russian.<sup>71</sup> Script reforms were introduced for several of the languages in the 1920s when Latin script was introduced along the lines of the Turkish script reforms. The later change to the Cyrillic script is mentioned for the Kyrgyz,<sup>72</sup> but not for the Uzbek reforms<sup>73</sup> and there is no reflection that this latter reform obstructed the mutual understanding of the written language between the people of Central Asia and her brethren in the outside Turkish speaking world.<sup>74</sup> Higher education gradually became available for students from Central Asia. In 1928-29 there were, for example, over 300 Kazakh students studying in Moscow, Leningrad,

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<sup>67</sup>Ma 2000: 184

<sup>68</sup>Ma 2000: 244, 262

<sup>69</sup>Ma 2000: 264

<sup>70</sup>Ma 2000: 311

<sup>71</sup>Ma 2000: 265 (Uzbeks)

<sup>72</sup>Ma 2000: 292

<sup>73</sup>Ma 2000: 265

<sup>74</sup>Mentioned in Soucek 2000: 233

Saratov, Omsk, Kazan, etc.<sup>75</sup> In Tajikistan after World War II the educational level was so that the Tajiks entered higher positions, and most leaders were Tajik while their deputies were Russians, Ukrainians, etc.<sup>76</sup> Education was also part of the socialisation process of the women of Central Asia. There were campaigns for the elimination of illiteracy, more women entered schools, large numbers removed their veils, and there were changes in the customs such as early marriage and the economic arrangements surrounding marriages.<sup>77</sup>

In the whole process the Soviet authorities were very much aware of what went on beyond the borders of the Soviet Union and the consequences this might have for their control over the central Asian regions:

"In the process of preparation for the Central Asian nationality states, the Soviet Communist Party carried out a decisive struggle with the pan-Turkish and Great Country Chauvinist thought. The pan-Turkists fundamentally denied the existence of different nationalities in Central Asia and acknowledge that they were one single nationality who had arisen from the common relations of Islam believers and Turkish blood relations. The Great Country Chauvinists, on the other hand, disregarded the wish for self-determination of each nationality."<sup>78</sup>

and their attitude may have been influenced by reminding themselves of the numerous uprisings of these people against the Russian authorities in the 1800s and culminating with the great Central Asian rebellion in 1916:

"The rebellions which in 1916 broke out in the Kyrgyz region was part of the uprisings of the Central Asian people; participating in the uprising were workers from all social strata, all kinds of different social bodies and representatives of all classes."<sup>79</sup>

It is labelled the largest Central Asian rebellion in history.

The fourth part of the book concerns the period of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the five states after independence. It is, for each country, a rather detailed account of the political and economic processes they have gone through, particularly the changes in the political structure and the endeavours to find compromises between 'Western' forms of governance and the need for an effective leadership with the ability to implement the necessary reforms of the economy that suffered from falling or negative growth rates. For Kazakhstan the book mentions four problems: Severe contradictions between the executive and the legislative branch of government, regionalism threatening the exercise of government authority, worries over intensification of ethnic contradictions, and the difficulties that the political parties may play a constructive role.<sup>80</sup>

The sympathy of the authors seems to be with the leaders who have been able to promote stability, and the star seems to be President Karimof of Uzbekistan, where "there has not appeared

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<sup>75</sup>Ma 2000: 220

<sup>76</sup>Ma 2000: 328

<sup>77</sup>Ma 2000: 265

<sup>78</sup>Ma 2000: 256

<sup>79</sup>Ma 2000: 166

<sup>80</sup>Ma 2000: 373-74

the crisis in political circles of antagonism between president and parliament seen in other member states in CIS".<sup>81</sup> The measures taken in this process includes limitations on the activities of opposition parties, strengthening of the power of the ruling party, restrictions on the freedom of the press, and strict limitations on religious activity,<sup>82</sup> but also a liberalisation of the economy that includes the first stock exchange of the five Central Asian states.<sup>83</sup>

The final section of the book is on Chinese relations with the five Central Asian states after their independence. The three main points to observe is 1) Western influence rapidly permeates Central Asia. 2) The close relationship between Russia and each Central Asian state. 3) Turkey, Iran, and other strong regional Islamic states view the Central Asian region as a new world for expanding their influence. The latter touches directly upon China as the development of various kinds of relationships between the Islamic world and Central Asia

"may cause some pan-Turkists and pan-Islamists and a very few splittists inside the borders of our country to germinate new hope of realising their dreams. This must lead to our vigilance."<sup>84</sup>

The sections continues with a survey of the items where China has an interest in Central Asia, such as the strategic position on the continent, the potential of the region, and the common borders. Then follow a survey of the nationalities that are the same in Xinjiang and Central Asia, etc. and the section ends with a historical overview over three phases in the developments in Chinese relations with Central Asia in the 1980s and 1990s.

By way of a conclusion we should note that the first genuine Chinese history of the five central Asian states clearly shows concern for the most recent history and the contribution historians can make to advance this understanding. This follows a recent trend in contemporary Chinese historiography on foreign countries. Until a few years ago history ended around the middle of the 1900s. For the older history the historiographical innovation may not be so conspicuous. It is mainly the history of political events with the occasional attention to economic factors and a few remarks in the vein of Marxist dogmatism.

Regional history rather than histories of each single country has been proposed for Chinese world historiography, and this region, as the meeting place and the place of transit for trade, technology, thought, and religions, would have been an obvious testing ground. There are sprouts of the regional, but the historians rapidly slip into state histories or national histories beginning around 1500, or long before the states were formed in the 1920s. Modern regional phenomena transgressing the borders of each of the states, such as pan-Turkish and pan-Islamism, are rather instruments of extra-regional forces to interfere in the region, and pose a threat to some of its neighbours.

The relationship of the nationalities to their brethren in China is not overlooked, neither is earlier Chinese contributions to the formation and stabilisation of the dominant nationalities of Central

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<sup>81</sup>Ma 2000: 395-96

<sup>82</sup>Ma 2000: 396-97

<sup>83</sup>Ma 2000: 399

<sup>84</sup>Ma 2000: 438-39

Asia. Ethnically the concentration is on these dominant nationalities. The problems with other nationalities in modern times are mentioned, but they are mostly in-migrants during the Russian and particularly the Soviet period. The indigenous minorities of present day Central Asia have been given a very small role in historical development. Central Asia has through history been a battleground of outside forces, of the 'Great Game' on the Eurasian continent. The fluid situation with many nationalities may have contributed to this unstable situation, but this situation may now change with the formation of independent states with a dominant indigenous nationality. To add to the prospect of stability each of the states and the state-bearing nationalities have now by the Chinese historians been assigned a history as far back as Chinese sources allows.

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